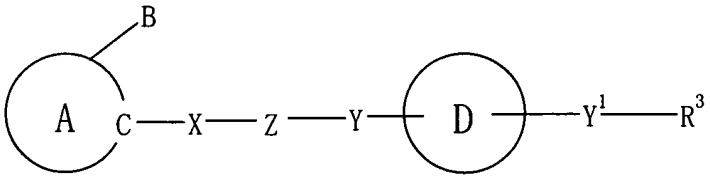
Amendments to the Claims

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Original) A compound represented by the formula



(II)

wherein

ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);

B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;

X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;

Z is -O-, -S-, $-NR^2-$, $-CONR^2-$ or $-NR^2CO-$ (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);

Y and Y^1 are the same or different and each is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and

D is a ring optionally further having substituent(s);

R^3 is an optionally substituted acyl group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group,

provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,

and provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is pyrazole, X is methylene, Z is -S- and Y is a bond, then the ring represented by D should not be oxadiazole,

or a salt thereof.

10. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole, oxadiazole, thiadiazole, triazole or tetrazole ring.

11. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the optionally substituted acyl group represented by R^3 is a group of the formula: $-SO_2R^4$, $-SOR^4$ or $-PO_3R^4R^5$ wherein R^4 and R^5 are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group or a heterocyclic group, and R^4 and R^5 may form a heterocycle together with the adjacent oxo-substituted phosphorus atom and two oxygen atoms.

12. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole ring.

13. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein B is an optionally substituted aromatic hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted aromatic heterocyclic group.

14. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein X is a divalent C_{1-8} aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

15. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Z is $-CONR^2-$ (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group).

16. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Y is a bond or a C_{1-4} alkylene.

17. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein Y^1 is a bond or a C_{1-4} alkylene.

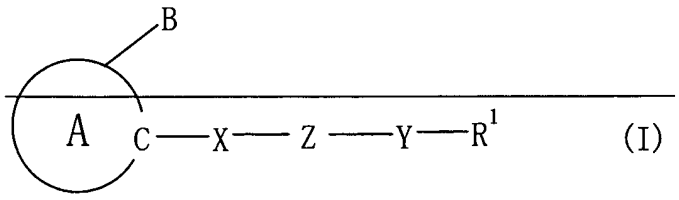
18. (Original) The compound of claim 9, wherein the ring represented by D is a C_{6-14} aromatic hydrocarbon ring.

19. (Original) The compound of claim 9, which is diethyl [4-({(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate;
(2E)-N-{4-[(2,4-dioxo-1,3-thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide;

(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-imidazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-pyrazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide;
diethyl [4-({(2E)-3-[1-methyl-5-(2-thienyl)-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[(3-methyl-2,4-dioxo-1,3-thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-N-[4-(1H-benzimidazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[hydroxy(2-pyridinyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide;
(2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(4-morpholinylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide; or
(2E)-N-{4-[(ethylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide.

20. (Original) A pharmaceutical agent comprising the compound of claim 9 or a prodrug thereof.

21. (Currently amended) A method for preventing or treating neuropathy in a mammal, which comprises administering ~~a compound represented by the formula:~~



(I)

~~wherein~~

~~ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);~~

~~B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;~~

~~X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;~~

~~Z is -O-, -S-, -NR^2-, -CONR^2- or -NR^{2}CO- (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);~~

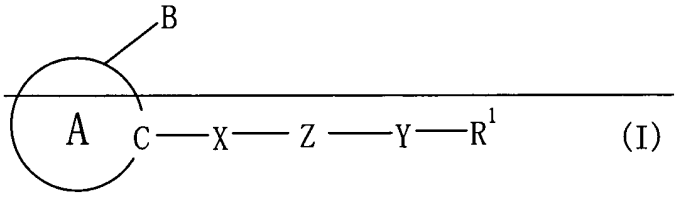
~~Y is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and~~

~~R^1 is an optionally substituted cyclic group, an optionally substituted amino group or an optionally substituted acyl group,~~

~~provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,~~

~~or a salt thereof,~~ the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

22. (Currently amended) A method for promoting production or secretion of a neurotrophic factor in a mammal, which comprises administering ~~a compound represented by the formula:~~



~~wherein~~

~~ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);~~

~~B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;~~

~~X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;~~

~~Z is -O-, -S-, -NR^2-, -CONR^2- or -NR^{2}CO- (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);~~

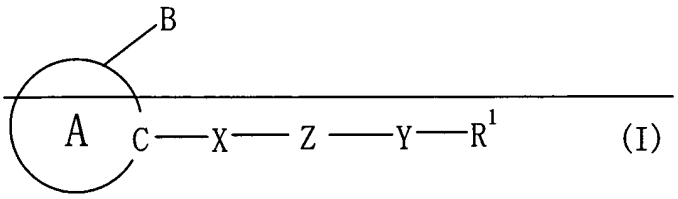
~~Y is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and~~

~~R^1 is an optionally substituted cyclic group, an optionally substituted amino group or an optionally substituted acyl group,~~

~~provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,~~

~~or a salt thereof,~~ the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

23. (Currently amended) A method for ameliorating pain in a mammal, which comprises administering ~~a compound represented by the formula:~~



~~wherein~~

~~ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);~~

~~B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;~~

~~X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;~~

~~Z is -O-, -S-, -NR²-, -CONR²- or -NR²CO- (R² is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);~~

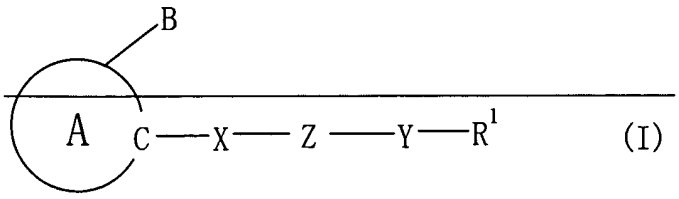
~~Y is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and~~

~~R¹ is an optionally substituted cyclic group, an optionally substituted amino group or an optionally substituted acyl group,~~

~~provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,~~

~~or a salt thereof,~~ the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

24. (Currently amended) A method for protecting a nerve in a mammal, which comprises administering ~~a compound represented by the formula:~~



~~wherein~~

~~ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);~~

~~B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;~~

~~X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;~~

~~Z is -O-, -S-, -NR^2-, -$CONR^2$- or -NR^2CO- (R^2 is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);~~

~~Y is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and~~

~~R^1 is an optionally substituted cyclic group, an optionally substituted amino group or an optionally substituted acyl group,~~

~~provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,~~

~~or a salt thereof,~~ the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

25-30. (Cancelled)